

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 1540

DEPT PASS NASA FOR TERRELL

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: TSPA, UR, US
SUBJECT: US-USSR SPACE COOPERATION: INTERPLANETARY EXCHANGE AND
SHUTTLE-SALYUT (04.03 AND 04.06)

REFS: (A) STATE 3393, (B) MOSCOW 525

1. DURING JANUARY 31 MEETING AT INTERKOSMOS VERESHCHETIN
MADE A NUMBER OF POLEMICAL POINTS CONCERNING INTER-
PLANETARY COOPERATION AND SHUTTLE-SALYUT. VERESHCHETIN
NOTED THAT HE HAD RECEIVED SCST REPORT OF HINNERS-PETROV-
KIRILLIN NOVEMBER 17 CONVERSATION, BUT HE CLAIMED THAT
SOVIET RECORD OF THE MEETING DID NOT INCLUDE ANY
OBLIGATION FOR THE TWO PARTIES TO MEET AND TO EXCHANGE
INFORMATION ON INTERPLANETARY RESEARCH PLANS.
(VERESHCHETIN ATTEMPTED TO DOWNGRADE IMPORTANCE OF HINNERS-
KIRILLIN-PETROV MEETING, BY CLAIMING THAT IT WAS
CHIEFLY A "COURTESY CALL.") VERESHCHETIN CLAIMED
THAT US WAS "PRESSING" THE SOVIETS TO PROVIDE MORE
INFORMATION THAT WAS CUSTOMARY FOR THE SOVIETS, AND
HE ASSERTED THAT NO AMOUNT OF US PRESSURE WOULD
FORCE THE SOVIETS TO CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOR IN THIS
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REGARD. VERESHCHETIN STATED THAT THE US AND THE
SOVIET UNION HAVE AGREED TO VARIOUS SPECIFIC FORMS OF
SPACE COOPERATION, BUT THEY HAVE NOT AGREED TO
"COORDINATE" THEIR PLANETARY RESEARCH PROGRAMS, WHICH APPEARED TO
BE THE US AIM. THE SOVIET UNION WOULD NEVER AGREE TO SUCH
COORDINATION, VERESHCHETIN SAID, AND CLAIMED THAT US PRESSURE TO
EXCHANGE MORE INFORMATION WAS CAUSING SOME GROUPS

WITHIN THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO QUESTION WHETHER THE US HAS "ULTERIOR MOTIVES." VERESHCHETIN ALSO EXPRESSED ANNOYANCE WITH NASA POSITION THAT WE NEED INFORMATION ABOUT SOVIET INTERPLANETARY ACTIVITIES TO HELP JUSTIFY BILATERAL SPACE COOPERATION TO CONGRESS. VERESHCHETIN NOTED THAT SOVIETS ALSO HAD INTERNAL COORDINATION PROBLEMS ON BUDGETARY AND OTHER MATTERS AND HE COMMENTED THAT IT WAS UP TO US TO SOLVE ITS OWN PROBLEMS WITHOUT RELYING ON THE SOVIETS FOR ASSISTANCE.

2. VERESHCHETIN ALSO COMMENTED THAT SOVIETS HAD NOTICED A DISTINCTLY COOLER APPROACH TOWARD SHUTTLE-SALYUT THAN HAD BEEN EVIDENT DURING THE PLANNING FOR THE APOLLO-SOYUZ PROJECT. REFERRING TO THE ARTICLE IN "AVIATION WEEK AND SPACE TECHNOLOGY" ABOUT THE SHUTTLE-SALYUT TALKS, WHICH INDICATED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD PUSHED FOR AN AGREEMENT TO GO AHEAD WITH THE PROJECT, VERESHCHETIN STATED THAT THE US SHOULD DISABUSE ITSELF OF THE NOTION THAT THE SHUTTLE-SALYUT PROJECT WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO THE USSR THAN TO THE US. VERESHCHETIN NOTED THAT SOVIETS WANTED TO PROCEED WITH SHUTTLE-SALYUT, BUT IF THE PROJECT DID NOT OCCUR IT WOULD HAVE NO SUBSTANTIVE EFFECT ON SOVIET SPACE PROGRAM. AS EVIDENCE OF ALLEGED US COOLNESS TOWARD SHUTTLE-SALYUT, VERESHCHETIN NOTED THAT SOVIETS HAVE

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NOT YET RECEIVED ANY INFORMATION ABOUT SECOND ROUND OF TALKS, WHICH ARE TO BE HELD IN LATE MARCH OR APRIL ACCORDING TO THE "SUMMARY OF RESULTS" SIGNED AT LAST SHUTTLE-SALYUT TALKS.

3. COMMENT. PERHAPS BUOYED BY RECENT SOVIET SPACE SUCCESSES, VERESHCHETIN WAS MORE ASCERBIC THAN USUAL. VERESHCHETIN WAS PERSONALLY PIQUED THAT THE US HAD GONE THROUGH THE KIRILLIN CHANNEL ON THE INTERPLANETARY ISSUE. HOWEVER, WHILE HE EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS SPEAKING INFORMALLY, HIS REMARKS ON INTERPLANETARY EXCHANGES OBVIOUSLY REFLECT DEEPLY HELD POSITIONS IN SOME SOVIET QUARTERS. WITH RESPECT TO VERESHCHETIN'S REMARKS ON SHUTTLE-SALYUT, HOWEVER, WE SUSPECT THAT HE "DOETH PROTEST TOO MUCH." REAL SOVIET DESIRE TO MOVE FORWARD WITH SHUTTLE-SALYUT WAS CLEARLY EVIDENT IN HIS CONCERN TO NAIL DOWN TIME FOR NEXT MEETING OF SHUTTLE-SALYUT WORKING GROUPS. VERESHCHETIN SAID HE WILL CONSULT WITH PETROV, WHO RETURNS TO MOSCOW THIS WEEK FROM VACATION, ON A REPLY TO THE LOVELACE LETTER. SCICOUNS EMPHASIZED U.S. DESIRE FOR PROMPT REPLY. END COMMENT.

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